

Etape du Tour 2010 Guided Trip

TRIP DETAILS:

Duration: 5 days (4 nights)

Dates: Friday 16 July to Tuesday, 20 July 2010

Start and Finish: Pau Airport, Lourdes Airport or Train Station

Accommodation: Comfortable traditional hotel in Argeles-Gazost

Group Size: Maximum 20 people (3 Staff)

Cost: AUD\$2350.00

Deposit: [AUD \\$1000*](#) – [Secure your spot now.](#)

Optional Extras: Reserved seating in the Grand Palais stand on the Champs Elysees, Bike rental (Cannondale Synapse carbon fibre), pre or post tour accommodation to extend your stay in Paris, travel insurance and car rental.

Who is this trip for?



This is a small group tour that combines the chance to ride in the popular L'Étape du Tour cyclosporitif event over a full stage of the Tour de France only days before the pros, with a relaxing week in a lovely small town in the French Pyrenees where we experience live two of the biggest Tour de France stages for 2010. L'Étape du Tour is incredibly popular with almost 10,000 entrants annually. It's as close as you'll get to knowing what it's like to be a Tour rider, with crowds out to cheer and encourage you throughout the day. You'll receive a guaranteed entry for 2010, plus the support of the Bikestyle crew on the day. All you have to do is ride and

we'll worry about the logistics of how you get to the start and back from the finish! It's a tough 174km route from Pau to the summit of Col du Tourmalet, with 3 long and hard climbs, so although all sorts of people complete the event every year it's not a ride for beginners and does require some training before the event.

The trip is designed especially for people riding in L'Étape du Tour. This trip will also cater for your non cycling partner with visits to the race and other attractions but it's worth remembering this is primarily a trip for cyclists.

Day 1 Friday 16 July 2010

Our trip starts today with our guests arriving and being transferred to our hotel in the small town of Argeles-Gazost, in the river valley between the Col du Tourmalet and Col d'Aubisque. We will offer transfers from Pau Airport, Lourdes Airport or Train Station during the day.

Once you are settled in to the hotel we'll give you a hand to assemble your bike and take you on an easy ride along the valley to Cautarets. Our hotel is in a quiet area of the delightful small town of Argeles-Gazost, and is a small family run traditional hotel well who will make our stay a true experience of French hospitality and cuisine. Tonight we'll have our welcome dinner in the hotel restaurant, which is a great chance to really get to know your fellow travellers, as well as have any questions about the next week answered by our staff.

Overnight: Argeles-Gazost

Meals: Dinner

Day 2 Saturday, 17 July 2010



Pau is taken over by L'Etape du Tour Mondovelo today and is where we will go this morning for everyone to complete their registration and check out the latest cycling gear at the large cycling expo that is part of the event. There will be the option of having a complete rest day from the bike, or cycling along the valley from Lourdes to Pau over a slightly downhill route that won't tire you out for tomorrow's big event. Pau is an attractive town that has hosted the Etape du Tour before, the last time in 2008 on the route from Pau to the summit of Hautacam. It's also a city that due to its

geographical position at the base of many of the Pyrenees biggest cols has hosted the Tour de France no less than 62 times! After you've completed your race registration for tomorrow you'll have time for a relaxed lunch and look around Pau before we transfer you back to Argeles-Gazost this afternoon. Tonight we'll have a special "carbo load" dinner and an early night to rest up for tomorrow's big day.

Overnight: Argeles-Gazost

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 3 Sunday, 18 July 2010

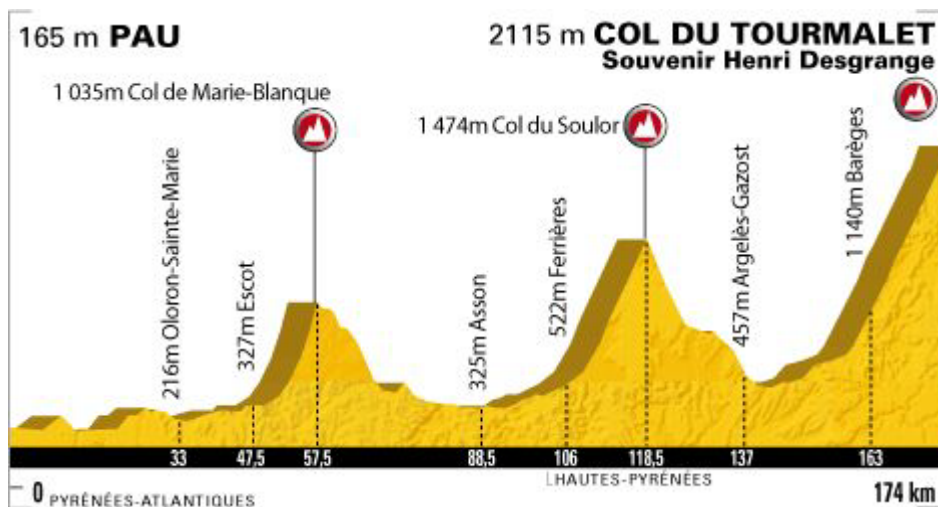


We'll be up before the sun this morning so we can travel to Pau in time to take up our positions in the start area along with the thousands of other cyclists who have travelled to Pau for the challenge of L'Etape du Tour. Luckily you've got the Bikestyle Tours team to look after you this morning, so all you need to worry about is riding 174km and climbing over 3 mighty cols!

The atmosphere in the start area is a mixture of nerves and excitement as the much anticipated day has finally come, but take your time and ride within your abilities and enjoy the atmosphere is the best advice.

The summit of Col du Soulor is 118km into the ride and you'll find the friendly face of a Bikestyle Tours team member waiting for you as you reach the top with refreshments and your warm clothing for the long descent down into Argeles-Gazost.

After you've finally crossed the finish line on top of Col du Tourmalet it's a quick descent to the village of St Marie de Campan to meet our vehicle at for the transfer back to our hotel. It may also be possible to return to the hotel by descending back down the Etape route to the village, but this may not be allowed on the day so we'll play it safe and plan to transfer you from St Marie de Campan. Tonight you'll be tired, but happy, so maybe a few glasses of wine with dinner to celebrate your achievement.



Overnight: Argeles-Gazost

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 4 Monday, 19 July 2010

A sleep in this morning, followed by a leisurely breakfast on the pool terrace will set the theme for today. We'll have an easy day to recover with a trip into Lourdes this morning for a spot of sightseeing in this famous pilgrimage town. It's an amazing sight with people from all over the world coming to the city to pay homage to Bernadette at the grotto where she had the miraculous visions in 1858. The city, with its rather bizarre religious souvenir shops, is quite an experience!

If you'd like some more souvenirs, of the cycling rather than religious variety, we can pay a visit to the excellent bike shop of ex Tour de France rider, Hubert Arbes. For a great view over the town and distant mountains take the funicular railway from the edge of town to the top of the Pic du Jer. You can choose to travel to and from Lourdes in the comfort of our van, or if you fancy an easy ride take the excellent bike path that follows the river Gave over a pleasantly flat 15km from Argeles. Once back in Argeles we can relax and catch the final hour of today's Tour de France live on television from the comfort of our hotel or in a bar with the locals.

Overnight: Argeles-Gazost

Meals: Breakfast

Day 5 Tuesday, 20 July 2010

Sadly our tour ends today. We will provide transfers to Pau Airport, Lourdes Airport or Train Station during the day. It is possible for you to stay on until the afternoon to see the stage pass by the hotel and then depart.



We've ridden the Col du Soulor and Col du Tourmalet on our own "Etape du Tour", now it's our turn to see how the professionals do it. Today's stage from Luchon to Pau is probably the toughest stage of the 2010 Tour de France climbing over 4 cols, Peyresourde, Aspin, Tourmalet and Aubisque with a total distance of

196km. From our hotel in Argeles – Gazost we have the choice of seeing the race pass through the town centre with minimal effort, or seeing the peloton struggle up the final climb of Col du Soulor (Aubisque). By the time they reach this final climb they'll be feeling the miles in their legs so it's the best place to see the race at a speed that's not superhuman! It will be an exciting day and with a bit of planning we'll make it down in time to see the race finish on TV from Argeles!

Meals: Breakfast.

Tour cost: \$2350.00 per person twin share and includes:

- Transport throughout by private minibus or vans with custom bike trailer
- Entry into the 2010 Etape du Tour
- Start and finish transfers during Etape du Tour
- Services of 3 experienced tour guides and our coach driver.
- Transfer on 16 July from Pau airport and Lourdes rail station to hotel.
- Transfer on 20 July from hotel to Lourdes rail station and Pau airport
- 4 night's accommodation in comfortable traditional hotel with private facilities.
- Buffet breakfast daily
- Delicious 3 course meal on 3 nights.
- Mechanical assistance with your bike
- Sightseeing as listed
- Maps and Bikestyle guide to the L'Etape du Tour